

## Waddell Elementary School

### Newsletter – January 2020

It is hard to believe that we are already beginning the second semester of this great school year! This year, we continue to focus on providing more enrichment and extension opportunities inside the classroom while supporting the pullout groups for identified gifted students. Mr. Clark communicates with teachers to best connect any enrichment to content being taught in the classroom. We would like to share with you a summary of some of what we have accomplished so far.

In Kindergarten, Mr. Clark has been regularly meeting with students selected by the teachers. The students are separated into two small groups that meet on Monday and Tuesday mornings for about 50 minutes. Students that show a need for enrichment or extension are chosen to participate. Group members may change depending on positive behavior and academic performance in the regular classroom. In our sessions, the students have focused on higher-level number sense activities leading to more advanced addition skill building involving more than two addends. Students have responded well to the challenging work and it is a joy to work with them each week. Students have worked in the TOPS (Techniques of Problem Solving) series and continue to be challenged at their appropriate levels.

In addition, Jacky Foster works weekly with students in small groups chosen by the teachers in the area of reading. The main materials being used in this reading group are the *Junior Great Books* series that encourage discussion and opinions of different topics. Students read as a group then hold a thoughtful discussion led by Ms. Foster. This small setting allows students to open up, share their thoughts, and form opinions based on evidence from the reading.

In second grade, Mr. Clark regularly meets with a small group of students selected by the teachers. These students are chosen based on their academic performance in class and motivation to learn beyond the lesson objectives. This quarter, the students have focused on language arts enrichment through reading activities in the *Jacob's Ladder* series. Students analyzed a poem and did several critical thinking exercises centered on the poem that involved writing, discussion, and art.

In third grade, Mr. Clark regularly meets with a group of students selected by teachers. Students have worked on math activities ranging from complex math-games involving mental math skills, advanced addition/subtraction skills to arrive at specific numbers after so many steps, and mini projects that require the creation of an original product, i.e. a new math game. Students also worked on *Mathfinders* that require students to solve maze puzzles by identifying math equations hidden within a matrix of numbers. Students have been very engaged in these activities.

In addition to these groups, all 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students, in November, took the CogAT (Cognitive Abilities Test) as part of the gifted identification process that takes place in the third grade. Later this month, the gifted identification committee consisting of the principal, guidance counselor, classroom teacher, and gifted education coordinator will meet to review eligibility for the students that meet the criteria outlined in our local Gifted Education Plan you can find on the district website.

In fourth and fifth grade, math pullout groups have been very productive. Students have been working with choice boards that connect with content from the regular curriculum. We have also done math extension activities that incorporate learning about the Electoral College system at the beginning of

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November due to elections across the country. Furthermore, students continue to work with increasingly challenging STEM Perplexor problems that are deductive logic puzzles. Students that show strong control of the problems they are working on advance to the next level providing the necessary challenge to grow. In addition to these activities, students are given problems based on real world scenarios that require collaboration with others. For example, they are hired for a specific job due to their skillset and they are given a deadline to complete the task. Students are growing in their abilities and we look forward to another semester filled with more growth.

In fourth grade, students identified in language arts created original realistic fiction picture books based on cultural traditions and/or celebrations from around the world. The students researched different traditions of their choice and created a narrative using PowerPoint. The students also participated in peer review and application of feedback to final product. The students were very engaged throughout the process.

If you are interested and available to volunteer in the areas of reading and/or math, please contact Jordan Clark at [jclark@lexedu.org](mailto:jclark@lexedu.org) with your availability. Also, if you are interested in the UVA Enrichment Summer camps, please contact Jordan Clark for more information. It has been a great first semester and we look forward to what the second one will bring us.